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ABSTRACT

Noting that the last decade has seen population shifts, economic and governmental changes, and different family and work patterns that have influenced the lives of children and their families of southeastern Pennsylvania, this report presents information on the current situation for children and families in the five counties of southeastern Pennsylvania. Statistics are presented in eight areas: (1) child health, including prenatal care, teenage pregnancy, health coverage, and lead poisoning; (2) child care, including number of children between birth and 5 years and number of accredited child care facilities and Head Start spaces; (3) child welfare, including reports of child abuse, and adoptions; (4) the safety net, including percentage of children living in poverty, and children from families receiving cash assistance; (5) making sure children have enough to eat, including food stamp and Women Infants and Children supplemental food programs; (6) reaching out to new and old communities, focusing on the growing diversity of children in southeastern Pennsylvania; (7) education, including per pupil expenditure; and (8) juvenile justice, including delinquency placements and youth in county detention facilities. Each section contains descriptions of promising practices as well as recommendations for actions needed in the area. (Contains 26 footnotes.) (KB)

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# The Bottom Line is ... Children

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## Philadelphia Citizens for Children and Youth

## 2001

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*Every day...*

in Bucks County, a child is left home alone after-school
while her parent(s) are at work;

in Chester County, a baby is born to a teenager;

in Delaware County, a toddler is in danger of getting lead poisoned;

in Montgomery County, a child is abused;

in Philadelphia, a child attends a crowded classroom where
there are not enough books, computers, time or attention paid to him.

*We Can and Must*
*Do Better.*

# The Bottom Line is ...
# Children

## Philadelphia Citizens for Children and Youth

Seven Benjamin Franklin Parkway
Sixth Floor
Philadelphia, Pa 19103
215-563-5848
215-563-9442
www.pccy.org

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# Introduction

Southeastern Pennsylvania is home to more than 900,000 children and their families. In Quakertown, Bensalem, Coatesville, Phoenixville, Norristown, Pottstown, South Philadelphia and Northeast Philadelphia, the bottom line is still children.

Each of the counties in Southeastern Pennsylvania has some children of deep poverty and some of great wealth. Each county has children who are adequately immunized, who have good health and child care. Each county has children who arrive at school ready to learn and whose schools are ready to teach. Each county has children who try to take care of themselves and their siblings after school and during the summer while their parents work. Each county has kids who are thriving in their schools and each has children who are being left out and left behind.

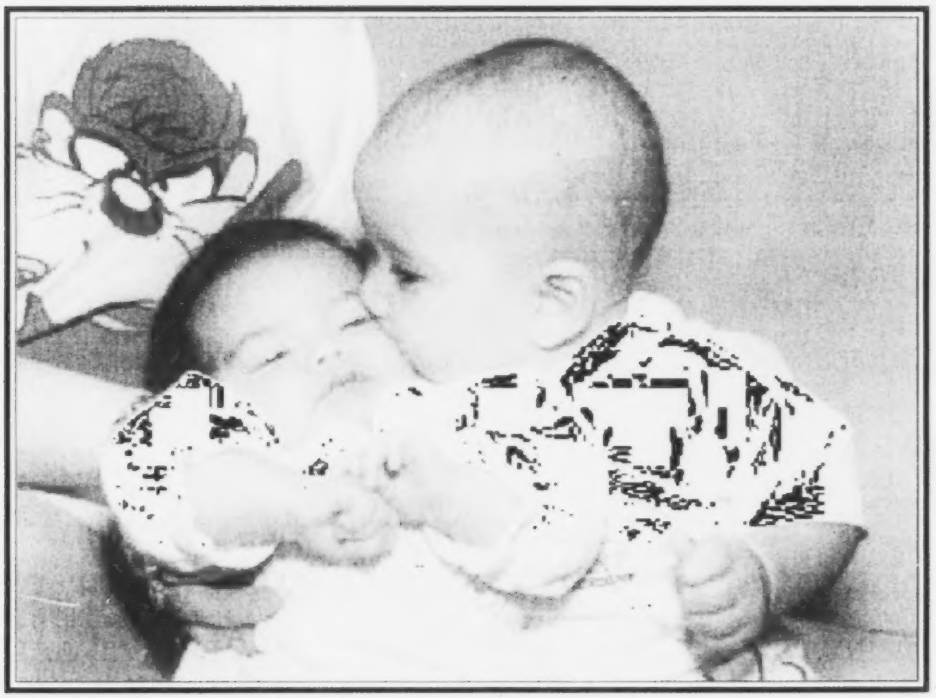
And, every one of these counties also has children who are not receiving needed health care or child care and who are not ready for school and whose schools are not ready for them. Each county has children who are cherished and nurtured, and others who are abused and neglected. Each has troubled kids and kids in trouble; they are kids who have too much happening to them and too little happening for them. Each of these counties has kids whose families have been here for more than 100 years and some who have been here for little more than 100 days.

There are children in each of these five counties who seem to have all the luck and others who have none. In each county, there are those with a positive vision of the future who feel a part of society, and those without hope who feel apart from the world in which they live.

In the last decade, population shifts, economic and governmental changes, and different family and work patterns have reshaped many of the communities in our region. As Philadelphia lost tens of thousands of people and businesses, some of the surrounding counties gained new families and new corporations. As the economy of the nation improved and welfare reform took hold, work and living patterns changed in many communities. Parents in low-income families took the early bus to jobs that were farther away from home and children, while increasing numbers of parents in upper income families commuted to jobs that often took them away from home for increasing amounts of time. Although neither the population of the state nor the region increased in comparison to many other sections of the country, the number of families expecting quality health care, needing good child care, demanding good schools, searching for after-school programs, and worrying about the future of their children, grew.

Here are parts of the picture in the context of those expectations, needs, demands, searches and worries about the children of Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia counties. Here is The Bottom Line...

# The Bottom Line is ...
# Healthy Children, Healthy Futures



*"Reach up your hand child, and take a star."*
*- Langston Hughes*

Each year, approximately 51,000 babies are born to women in Southeastern Pennsylvania. In every county in the region, parents want their babies to be born as healthy as possible. Throughout the region, our ability to provide outreach and health care to pregnant women and infants has been enhanced by Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Some communities have also improved access through federally funded public health initiatives, such as Healthy Start.

### Prenatal Care

Assuring that expectant mothers have regular prenatal care is considered an important step in improving the health of newborns. Research shows that women who do not receive adequate early prenatal care are more likely to give birth to a low birth weight baby, and that mothers who do not have health coverage are less likely to get prenatal care. Most women in the region had access to prenatal care. Still, some 4,400 babies in the region were born to women who had inadequate or no prenatal care, and 4,600 infants were born with a low birth weight (under 5.8 pounds, or before 37 weeks gestation).

### Teenage Pregnancy

Although nationally and locally the teen birthrate has declined, many teens in the region have babies. Teenage childbearing, particularly when the mother is a young teen, often presents major obstacles for both the mother and child. About 6,200 babies were born to teenage mothers in the region. In most instances, these young women were not quite ready for the enormity of the responsibilities placed upon them as mothers. Over one-third of the teens in the region who gave birth were under eighteen. How we as a community help our youngest grow is an unfolding story.

### Health Coverage

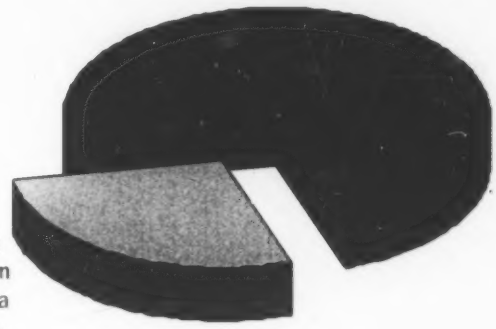
More Pennsylvania children than ever before are enrolled in Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). These two programs, supported by federal and state funds, provide free or low-cost health coverage to 812,000 low- to moderate-income children, or 27% of the state's three million children. Eligibility is based on family income and a child's age; in general, the lowest income and youngest children qualify for Medicaid; slightly higher income and older children often qualify for CHIP.

**Children in Pennsylvania Enrolled in Medicaid and CHIP**

Children Enrolled in Medicaid and CHIP - 27%

In the Southeastern region, some 310,000 children, close to 35%, are covered by either Medicaid or CHIP. Health coverage makes a concrete difference in children's lives. Study after study has shown that uninsured children often can't get the care they need, either to stay healthy or to get early treatment for sickness, before it becomes serious or even life threatening.

**Children in Southeastern Pennsylvania Enrolled in Medicaid and CHIP**



Children in Southeastern Pennsylvania Enrolled in Medicaid and CHIP- 35%

**Promising Practices**

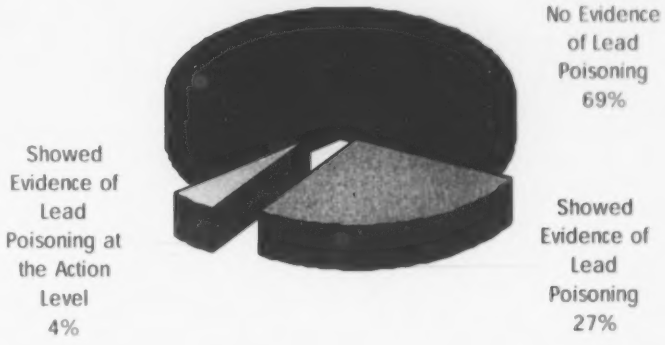
Twenty-six community-based agencies and health care providers have been participating in a three-year health insurance outreach and enrollment project in this region, with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Covering Kids program, administered locally by PCCY and statewide by Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children. The project, which provides a $50 stipend to participating agencies for each completed application for children's health coverage, has submitted over 1,500 applications, affecting at least twice as many children.

Agencies report that the work has been sometimes difficult, but extremely rewarding. One agency described it this way, *"It is a lot of work, but I've had parents crying for joy on the phone when they get coverage. They've been worried that their kid might fall out of a swing."* A health care provider said, *"Parents feel a lot more comfortable coming to us... it's a one-stop-shop. There is no waiting period with us... we have beepers after-hours, so we can help families who work late."*

Another community-based provider noted that being involved with enrolling children, *"enables us to troubleshoot... people know us and trust us, and when we suggest enrolling, it makes sense."* Community groups and health care providers we spoke with know the role health insurance can play in keeping children healthy and freeing families from the anxieties of medical bills. They are working to move families past initial reluctance or a feeling that insurance is not important. One group noted that once families obtain coverage *"they are almost universally satisfied."*

## Lead Poisoning

Results of Philadelphia's Lead Program Testing


No Evidence of Lead Poisoning 69%
Showed Evidence of Lead Poisoning at the Action Level 4%
Showed Evidence of Lead Poisoning 27%

Most of our children will thrive but some will not. Some of the children in our communities are harmed by lead, an epidemic so silent that unless they are screened when they are young, we hardly know that their illnesses, their developmental delays, and other problems are caused by a preventable environmental poison. While the removal of lead from gasoline has assisted in lowering the poison in the environment, the ongoing major problems of lead paint in older homes and, to a much lesser degree, lead in the water pipes, continue to harm thousands of young children every year.

In Bucks and Chester Counties, fewer than 500 children were screened for lead in 1999. In Montgomery County, the lead program reports almost 800 children screened, while in Delaware County the number is more than double at 1,917 children. In Philadelphia, the city's lead program received results of lead testing of almost 31,000 children. Of these children who were tested, 69% did not show evidence of being damaged by lead; 27% showed lead levels in their blood above the safe zone (lead above 10ugl) with another 4.5% of these children testing at the action level (above 20ugl).

## Actions Needed

*While there has been progress in the last decade in children's health, we have a long way to go. We should:*

- √ support programs that have improved access to prenatal care particularly for high risk women;
- √ expand the programs that have worked to reduce teen pregnancy and at the same time increase support for teen mothers in finishing school and avoiding second pregnancies;
- √ continue and increase our progress in simplifying and coordinating children's health insurance applications and coverage and in reaching out to uninsured children.

*As we address the enduring problems caused by lead poisoning, we must:*

√ improve our screening and reporting rates;

√ focus on prevention efforts with pregnant women and young children;

√ expand housing options for low-income families whose homes are harmful to our children.

| Birth Data for Southeastern Pennsylvania | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Bucks | Chester | Delaware | Montgomery | Philadelphia | Region |
| Births in Pennsylvania | 7,300 | 5,700 | 6,800 | 9,200 | 22,000 | 51,000 |
| Inadequate or No Prenatal Care | 540 | 640 | 850 | 900 | 1500 | 4,400 |
| Low Birth Weight | 530 | 360 | 490 | 630 | 2,600 | 4,600 |
| Infant Mortality (Infant died before first birthday) | 36 | 24 | 37 | 54 | 255 | 406 |
| Overall Teen Births | 594 | 344 | 805 | 715 | 3,759 | 6,217 |
| Birth to Teens Under 18 | 119 | 165 | 200 | 264 | 1,572 | 2,320 |

*Source: County Vital Statistics Data*

# The Bottom Line is ...
# Child Care

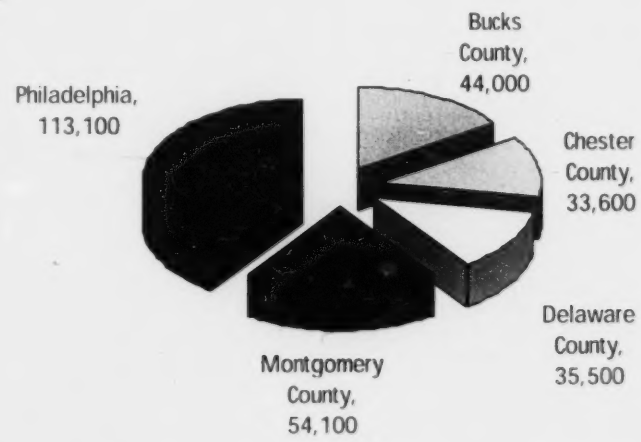
*"Children are likely to live up to whatever you believe of them."*
*- Ladybird Johnson*

Nationally, the majority of parents of young children are in the workforce. In 1994, 83% percent of children three to five years old whose parents were in the workforce were cared for regularly in childcare arrangements. Almost half of the children three and under received child care from a person outside the family. Seven out of ten children at or above the poverty level were engaged in regular child care arrangements; five out of ten children whose family income was below poverty level did not have a regular child care arrangement. (A Child's Day: Home, School and Play, US Census Report, Survey of Income and Program Participation 1994). The numbers have grown since then. The survey noted that good, early childhood care promotes school readiness. In the last decade, brain researchers have emphasized that the early childhood years are critical to future development and success.

According to the census, about 280,000 children between zero to five years of age live in the Southeastern Pennsylvania area. About 44,000 of these children live in Bucks County, almost 33,600 future grown-ups live in Chester County, 35,500 young children live in Delaware County, more than 54,100 of these preschool children live in Montgomery County, and 113,100 live in Philadelphia. As more and more women enter the workforce, the need for child care grows. By conservative estimate, about 60% or 168,000 of the children of the region need child care; there are approximately 99,000 regulated child care spots for these children. Thus an estimated 41% of the children in the region whose parents are in the workforce and need to be in child care are not in regulated care.

Many families who seek child care cannot afford it. Because parents need to be able to depend on steady, responsible care so that they can work knowing that their children are being protected and provided good social and educational experiences, the federal and state governments provide support for childcare. This assistance is provided primarily by a combination of federal and state funds through the Child Care Information Services (CCIS) and by the federal support of the Head Start program. As a result of federal increases in funding, support for each of these programs has grown in the last several years.

**Number of Children between Zero and Five Years of Age**

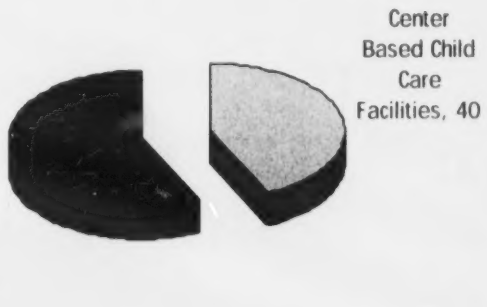


In order to be eligible for subsidized child care, family income must be lower than 200% of federal poverty level at entry, however, family income may go up to 235% of poverty without losing subsidy. Head Start eligibility is limited to 100% of the poverty level.

**Promising Practices**

The region has many promising practices to report. There are now 93 accredited child care programs (40 center, 53 family or group homes) in the region. The TEACH program, where child care teachers are increasing their education and improving their programs, has grown to 363 participants.

**Number of Accreditied Child Care Facilities in the Region**




Responding to the needs of working parents and their children, Bucks, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia counties together had about 6,000 children in some kind of extended-day, extended year Head Start Programs in the 1999-2000 school year. Other promising practices are mentoring and literacy programs for family day care homes, quality improvement grants, and capacity building initiatives.

**Actions Needed**

*The availability, accessibility and affordability of child care is critical to our region's families and workforce. We must:*

- √ increase the number of regulated programs, expand the assistance eligibility levels for children and families and simplify the process of applying for subsidy;
- √ de-link child support and subsidized child care, create incentives to encourage people to enter the early care and education field, provide tuition reimbursement and health care insurance for child care teachers and other low-income workers and reimburse childcare providers at a rate which corresponds to the quality of their programs (tiered reimbursement);
- √ fulfill the promise of universal availability of pre-kindergarten programs for the children of the region.

| Child Care Data for Southeastern Pennsylvania | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Bucks | Chester | Delaware | Montgomery | Philadelphia | Region |
| Number of Children 0-5 years of age | 44,052 | 33,666 | 33,559 | 54,128 | 113,094 | 278,499 |
| Number of Regulated Child Care Spaces | 12,688 | 9,553 | 10,795 | 21,393 | 44,370 | 98,799 |
| Number of Children Receiving Subsidized Child Care | 1,563 | 1,275 | 2,306 | 2,009 | 33,999 | 41,152 |
| Number of Head Start Spaces | 604 | 410 | 930 | 461 | 6534 | 8939 |
| Extended Day Head Start Programs (includes School Day and Full Day Programs) | 69 | 0 | 930 | 34 | 5479 | 6512 |

# The Bottom Line is ...
# Child Welfare

*"To take responsibility for the children whose nightmares come in the daytime."*

*- Ida J. Hughes*

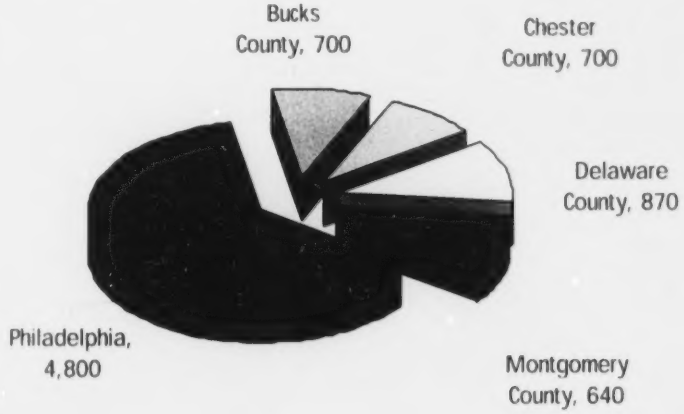
In Pennsylvania, 22,809 reports of suspected child abuse were made in 2000. Of these 5,002 were substantiated; 583 of the subjects of these reports were children who had been abused before. More than 3,000 children, or 62% who had been abused, were girls and 38% were boys; more than 1,000 of these children were sexually abused. Almost 500 children reported themselves as victims; more than 9,000 children were removed from the setting where the abuse occurred. Thirty-five Pennsylvania children died from abuse in 2000.

In Bucks County, 700 child abuse cases are reported each year; approximately 75 of the 712 reports were substantiated in 2000. Almost 1,680 children are under some kind of child welfare agency supervision. Of the services provided, 76% are delivered to the children and families in their own home through SCOH (Services to Children in their Own Homes), while close to 311 youngsters are in out-of-home placements. There were 43 children whose adoptions were finalized in 2000.

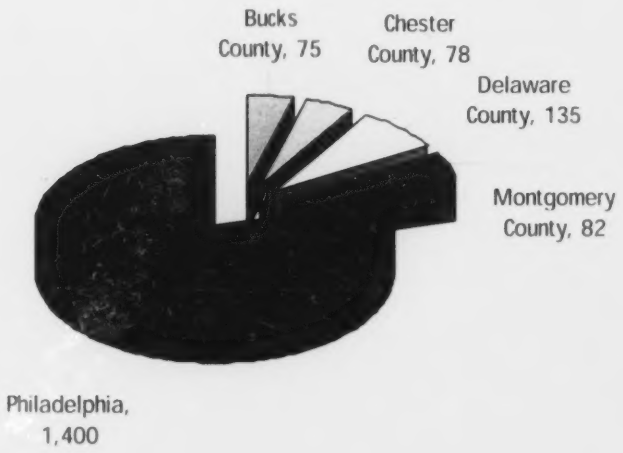
In Chester County, more than 600 children are reported abused each year, with 70 reports being substantiated in 2000. There are about 1,400 children under agency supervision, with 60% of them receiving services in their own homes through SCOH. Approximately 160 children are in foster care, and more than 550 are in some kind of out-of-home placement. The agency reported having 49 kinship care families, as well as finalizing 49 adoptions in 2000.

In Delaware County, the number of children who were reported or referred as abused in 2000 was about 750, with 150 of these children's cases being substantiated. About 650 children are in out-of-home placement, 316 of whom are in foster homes; several hundred of the children are living in kinship care arrangements. Most of the nearly 2,000 children who are under agency supervision, 69% of them, are receiving services in their own homes through SCOH. There were about 80 children whose adoptions were finalized in 2000. (Delaware County Needs Based Implementation Plan, August 2000).

**Approximate Number of Reports of Child Abuse (2000)**



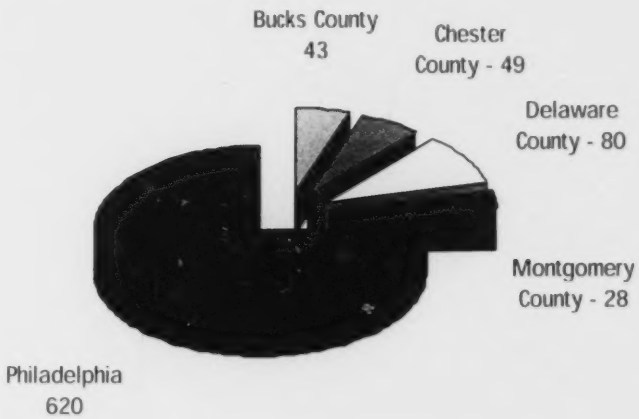
**Number of Substantiated Reports of Child Abuse (2000)**




In Montgomery County, approximately 500 cases of child abuse were reported to the county child welfare agency in 2000 with 102 of these reports being substantiated. Slightly more than 3,700 children were under agency supervision with 3,075 or 83% of these youngsters and their families receiving services in the homes through SCOH. There were about 700 children in out-of-home placement with 355 of these children in foster homes. Twenty-eight adoptions of children in the child welfare agency were finalized in 2000. In recent years, the number of adoptions ranged from 28-52 per year.

Philadelphia County received approximately 4,800 reports of child abuse and 8,000 reports of child neglect in 2000. Almost 1,400 abuse reports were substantiated. More than 23,400 children were under the supervision of the Department of Human Services (DHS) with about 66% of them, or 15,400, receiving services in their homes. Almost 8,000 of these children were in placement, with 5,579 of them in foster family care or other community-based care. More than one in five of the children's out-of-home placements in Philadelphia are with relatives (kinship care). More than 620 children were adopted in fiscal year 2000, with a projected 1,000 adoptions anticipated during fiscal year 2001.

**Number of Adoptions Finalized (2000)**



**Promising Practices**

In recent years, child welfare programs in the state have developed system reform processes that have encouraged the linking of family centers in low-income communities with early childhood development and parenting supports and increased prevention initiatives. The state and federal emphasis on ending foster care drift and moving children to adoption has had solid effects in most of the counties in the region and particularly in Philadelphia.

We strongly commend the increasing emphasis on prevention - creating more places to turn in the neighborhoods for family support, counseling and other assistance. We commend the creation of additional family centers in each community, the home visiting program, and increased recognition of kinship care providers. In Philadelphia DHS is reaching out to tell the community of the services it provides and what they can expect; in Norristown and Philadelphia, The Healthy Families pilot project is reaching out and visiting new parents to assist them in caring for new babies.

**Actions Needed**

*As a community and as a region, we must:*

√ increase the supports for families who are a part of both the welfare system and the child welfare system;

√ increase supports for kinship care families;

√ develop a stronger network to assist children whose teenage parents spent their childhoods in the child welfare system;

√ develop a back-up system for children whose families may be vulnerable to being cut off from welfare;

√ develop drop-in centers and supports for families;

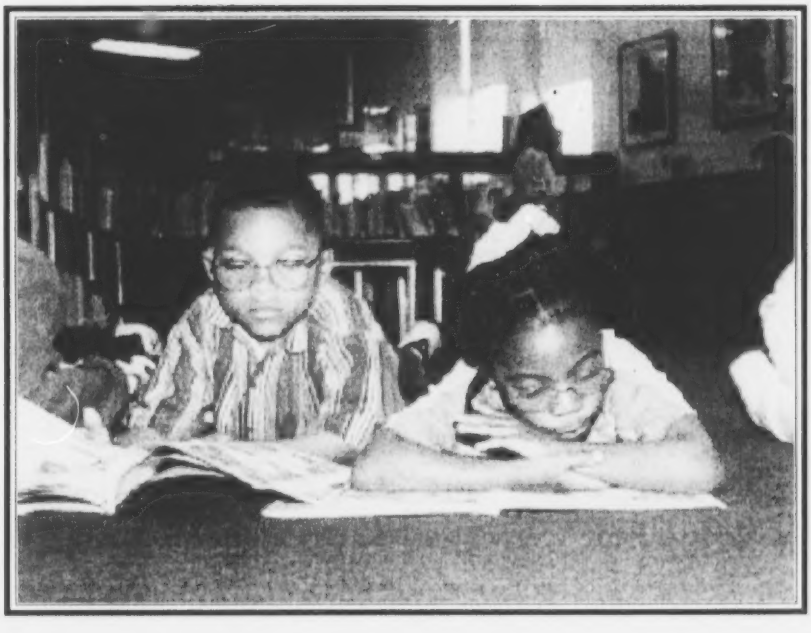
√ increase outreach and information about crisis nurseries and practice more early intervention on behalf of children who have behavioral health needs and whose family unit is fragile;

√ develop and implement more incentives to encourage people to enter and stay in the child welfare field.

| Child Welfare Data for Southeastern Pennsylvania | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Bucks | Chester | Delaware | Montgomery | Philadelphia |
| Child abuse reports | 712 | 600 | 750 | 500 | 4,800 |
| Substantiated reports | 75 | 70 | 150 | 102 | 1,400 |
| Children served by the county children and youth agency | 1,680 | nearly 1,400 | nearly 2,000 | more than 3,700 | more than 23,400 |
| Children receiving Services to Children in their Own Homes (SCOH) | 76% | 60% | 69% | 83% | 66% |
| Children in out-of-home placement | 311 | 560 | more than 650 | nearly 700 | nearly 8,000 |
| Children under the supervision of the county children and youth agency that have been adopted | 43 | 49 | 68 | 28 | 620 |

*Source: Needs Based Budget Plans - Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia Counties.*

# The Bottom Line is ...
# The Safety Net



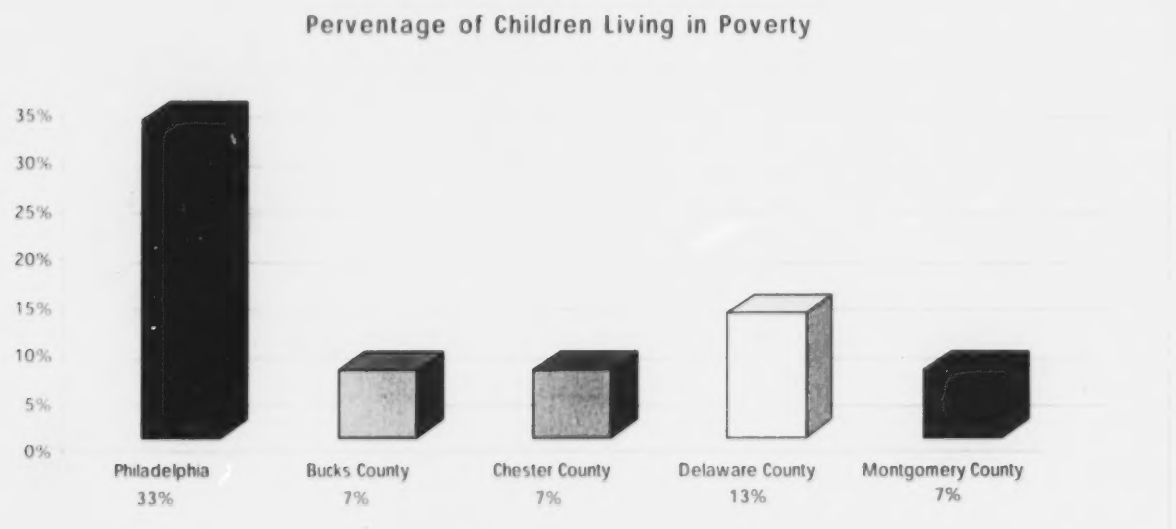
*Working full time is no defense against family poverty.*

Although poverty shapes the lives of many children, it is not confined to geographic areas or age categories. Nationally, the poverty rate among young children and the number of poor young children have declined since 1993, but are still well above the levels seen in earlier decades. Young children remain the poorest Americans.[1] One in six children, over 16% of children, in the United States and in Pennsylvania live in poverty.[2] One in three children in Philadelphia is poor.

The suburbs and rural communities are not immune from poverty's reach. The National Center for Children in Poverty reports that the rates of young children living in poverty grew at a much faster pace in suburban areas between the late 1970's and the mid 1990's than it did in urban areas. Since then, rates have fallen less quickly in suburban areas (11%) and rural areas (9%), than in urban areas (19%).

According to the 2000 census, 26% of the Bucks and Chester County populations are children; almost 7% of the children in each of these counties live at or below the poverty level. In Delaware County almost 25% of the population is children under age 18, 13% of these youngsters are living in poverty. In Montgomery County, children make up 24% of the population, with 7% of them living in poverty. Finally, in Philadelphia, 25% of the population consists of children, with about 33% living at or below the poverty level.

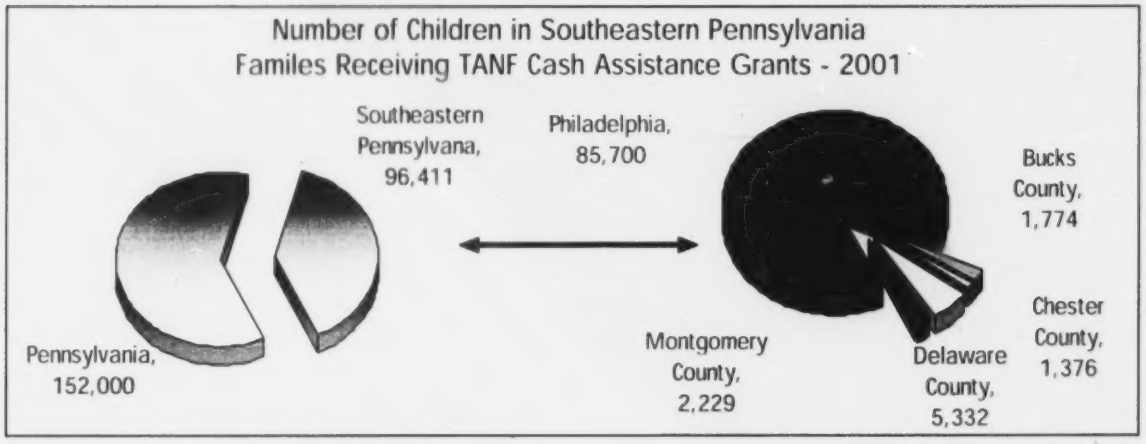
Poverty shapes the lives of thousands of children in the region. In general, there is a high correlation between the incidence of child poverty and the incidence of children being raised by single mothers. The 2000 census reports that of those families who have children under the age of 18, 30% are headed by single women in Chester City, and 28% in Coatesville and Darby, Delaware County. Twenty percent of the families in Philadelphia, and 19% of the families in Norristown, Montgomery County, are headed by a single woman.[3]



There has been a major growth in the number of children living in families not headed by a married couple - non-traditional families. The census reports almost half the children in Philadelphia and almost 20% of the children in the surrounding counties, are growing up in such families.[4] The implications of these non-traditional family structures vary. Some families have two unmarried partners who provide emotional and financial support to the children. Others do not. Historically, state and national policies have not encouraged low-income families to stay together, as in many instances, a "man in the house" jeopardized a family's ability to secure help from the safety net. Currently, the children of the United States have the highest poverty rate of any industrialized nation.[5] As reported by the *New York Times* on July 8, 2001 - "after a decade of unprecedented growth and well into the latest overhaul of the nation's welfare system, one in six American children, over 12 million youngsters, lived in poverty." Almost 100,000 children in our region are very poor.

**How Fragile is the Net?**

As of May 2001, there were 96,411 children in the region whose families received Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) cash assistance.[6] The amount of these cash grants has not been increased since 1989; currently TANF cash assistance grants provide a family support up to 35% of the poverty level.[7] In Bucks County, 1,774 children are in families receiving cash assistance; in Chester County there are 1,376 such children. Delaware County is home to 5,332 children whose families receive cash assistance; and Montgomery County is home 2,229 of these children. Philadelphia accounts for more needy families than the other four counties combined, with 85,700 children living in families who are dependent on the safety net of cash assistance. Thousands of the parents who head these families, and care for these children, will reach the end of their five-year lifetime limit on TANF cash assistance in March, 2002. In Philadelphia alone, about 7,900 families that include over 24,000 children, will reach their federal TANF time limits between March and June 2002.[8] This estimate includes families with adults who are not working because of disability or other barriers, as well as adults who are working but are still eligible for partial cash assistance grants because of their low wages. In fact, approximately 24% of these families are working more than 20 hours per week.[9]



Many of the families in the region and in the country work and still are very poor. Many of the parents of the poor children of the region work. Some work full time, some part time. They often work at minimum wage jobs that have little opportunity for advancement. Sometimes they work different hours every week and cannot rely on benefits. Sometimes their transportation costs and child care costs together don't let them get ahead. Many rely on partial cash grants to help support their families; these partial grants are subject to the five year limitation.[10]

Particularly for young children whose family incomes are low, having a full time working parent is no defense against poverty. Recent efforts to identify and develop a way to understand how much a family needs to live on in the region have resulted in a new standard. According to the "Self-Sufficiency Standard"[11] a parent working full time at minimum wage employment, would have great difficulty making ends meet. For instance, in Bucks County, a single parent with one infant and one preschooler must earn $17.42 per hour ($3,065 per month) in order to adequately provide for his or her family. For Chester, Delaware and Montgomery Counties, the standard for the same composition family is higher - up to $17.99 per hour ($3,167 per month). In Philadelphia, the standard for such a family is slightly lower, at $16.61 per hour ($2,923 per month).[12]

Even children with two parents who work full time at low wage jobs may remain in poverty. For a two parent family with an infant and a preschooler living in Bucks County, each parent must work full time at $9.88 per hour (a combined $3,478 per month) in order to meet the Self-Sufficiency Standard. The hourly wages, per adult, that are required to meet the Standard for two parent families in Chester ($10.17), Delaware ($9.92), Montgomery ($10.08), and Philadelphia ($9.22) counties are comparable.[13] The Self-Sufficiency Standard dramatically illustrates the need for child care subsidies, rental assistance, food stamps and other financial assistance to help low-income, working families.

**New Developments**

When welfare reform was enacted in 1996, in addition to time limits and expanded child care programs, several state programs were implemented to provide some support for transitioning families. Families who were receiving partial cash grants while working or in an approved training or education program could receive assistance in paying for childcare, as well as limited transportation and clothing allowances. Currently, families who earn less than 235% of the federal poverty level may access services in the new "Family Works" program through the Department of Public Welfare (DPW).[14]

In its early stages, however, the limitations on education and training for people trying to secure a decent job, as well as difficulties accessing child care and other services, plagued reform efforts. In response to experience, some legislative and other concerns, the State through DPW has modified its education requirements, improved to some degree the cumbersome process of securing child care assistance and proposes to establish specific *time out* criteria that will allow a subset of recipients to stop their TANF time clock.

The *time outs* provide incentives for those working 30 hours per week[15], limited exemptions to eligible volunteers[16] and to kinship care providers.[17] The final *time out* category is applicable to victims of domestic violence, who may qualify for an initial six month *time out*, with the potential for an additional six month *time out* if needed.[18] The details of "overtime," the name DPW has given to the extra time that may be available after March 2002, are currently in development. The development of *time outs* and "overtime" opportunities are promising overall, but whether they will be easy to secure, or reach broadly and deeply enough, remains to be seen. Much more remains to be done.

**Earned Income Tax Credit (EIC)**

In the last decade, the federal government initiated a program to increase the cash available to low-income families. The federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EIC) provides income supplements to low wage workers. It can be paid out in workers' paychecks throughout the year, rather than in one lump sum once the worker has filed his or her taxes. The EIC can substantially raise a family's income level and improves its chances of rising out of poverty.[19]

**State Tax Forgiveness**

There is currently a movement beginning among states to develop an EIC. While Pennsylvania has not established a refundable income tax benefit (EIC), the Commonwealth has exempted low-income families from having to pay the state income tax . The "Special Provision" (SP), or "tax forgiveness" program requires that the family must file the state income tax form and include a "PA Schedule SP" tax forgiveness credit form. A single parent with two children will owe no state income tax if his or her maximum income does not exceed is $21,500, or will owe only a partial tax if his or her income is between $21,500 - $23,750.[20] The tax forgiveness level was raised during this last budget (2001-2002).

**Actions Needed**

Tens of thousands of children and families who live close to us are living in poverty. We can and should do better.

*There are many steps our federal government can take to improve the situation of low-income families. We recommend that the federal government:*

- √ directly link the welfare of families and children to the reauthorization of TANF by offering incentives to states to lower their child poverty levels;
- √ provide on-going cash assistance to families that are working and are still unable to rise above the poverty level;
- √ raise the minimum wage so that families who are working full time can live above the poverty level;
- √ offer states incentives to provide benefits to low-income working families after they leave welfare;
- √ standardize eligibility requirements for its multiple benefit programs, simplify application rules, and re-examine the five year lifetime limit for cash assistance.

*There are many actions the state could take to improve the situation of low-income families. We recommend that the state:*

- √ create a state-only program that allows families to receive assistance so long as they are working or trying to work and are still struggling to make ends meet;
- √ simplify state procedures and rules so that families can easily access benefits;
- √ conduct more and better benefit outreach;
- √ design and implement *time outs* that are easy to understand and work for families.

| Safety Net Data for Southeastern Pennsylvania | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Bucks | Chester | Delaware | Montgomery | Philadelphia |
| Child Population | 26% | 26% | 25% | 24% | 25% |
| Number of Children in Poverty | 7% | 7% | 13% | 7% | 33% |
| Number of Children whose families are receiving Cash Assistance | 1,744 | 1,376 | 5,332 | 2,229 | 85,700 |
| Self-Sufficiency Standard - How much a family needs to live. (Single parent with one preschooler and one infant) | $17.42 per hour | $17.99 per hour | $17.99 per hour | $17.99 per hour | $16.61 per hour |
| Self-Sufficiency Standard - How much a family needs to live. (Two parents with one preschooler and one infant) | $9.88 per hour / per parent | $10.17 per hour / per parent | $9.92 per hour / per parent | $10.08 per hour / per parent | $9.22 per hour / per parent |

# The Bottom Line is ... Making Sure Children Have Enough To Eat

*"We went to the food cupboard. It was closed. My daughter asked what we were going to do. I told her I didn't know"*
*- a parent of a 10 year old*

While the United States Department of Agriculture reports that 27% of the food produced for human consumption in the United States goes to waste, many thousands of Americans are suffering from hunger each day. Despite the nation's prosperity, millions of children are hungry or live on the edge of hunger for economic reasons.[21] In Pennsylvania, nearly one million people live in households that are food insecure and 287,000 Pennsylvanians experience hunger. Although the eligibility for food stamps is broader than the poverty level, up to 130% of poverty,[22] the number of those participating in the food stamp program in the five county region does not begin to reach the numbers of people whose income suggests they need, and qualify for, food stamps.

From January 1999 through February 2001, 56,254 fewer people in the Philadelphia area received food stamps according to Pennsylvania Department of Welfare statistics.[23] Many working families stop receiving food stamps soon after leaving welfare, even though they remain food insecure. According to a DPW study, only half the families leaving TANF received food stamps and 18% experienced times without food.[24]

Increasingly, charitable food providers try to fill the gap and provide support to families in need. Through information provided by food banks/cupboards and other emergency food providers, the Greater Philadelphia Coalition Against Hunger estimates that there has been a 20% increase in the number of low-income families with children requiring food assistance. Additionally, many families are going to food cupboards every month, rather than sporadically as they had in previous years.

### *Almost half the food stamp participants in the State are children.*

Many families are confused about the process and mistakenly think that food stamps are time-limited. Many do not know that even if a member of the family is working they can still receive food stamps. Of the 834,900 Pennsylvanians who participated in the food stamp program in 2000, almost 47% were under 18 years old. Two percent of Bucks County residents, 1% of those in Chester, almost 5% from Delaware, 1.5% of those from Montgomery County, and 17% of Philadelphians participated in the food stamp program. The average benefit amount issued per person was a little over $70 monthly - or approximately $2.32 per day, 77 cents per meal. For working families the food stamp amount may be less, but still provides substantial assistance. For instance, a single parent with two children, with a full time job paying $8 per hour, child care costs of $120 per month, shelter costs of $500 per month (including utilities and taxes) and a telephone would qualify for about $110 in food stamps per month.[25]

### Women Infants and Children (WIC)

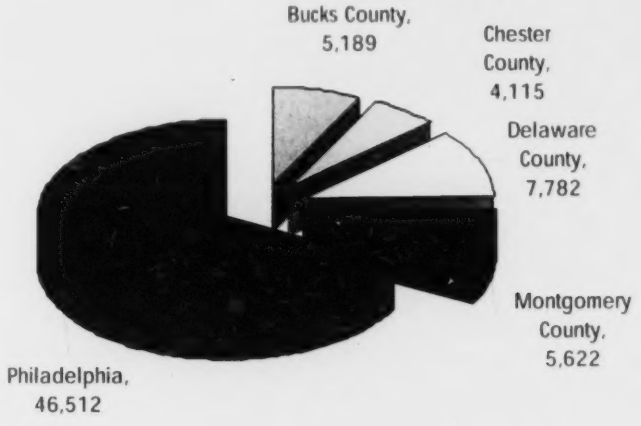
The Special Supplemental Food Program for Women Infants and Children (WIC) helps pregnant and breastfeeding mothers, babies and young children by providing vouchers for nutritious foods. WIC is available to breastfeeding women up to 12 months postpartum, non-breastfeeding women up to six months postpartum, and children up to five years of age who are determined by a health professional to be at medical or nutritional risk and whose family incomes are below 185% of poverty. WIC provides vouchers for a basic food package, the average of which is valued at $47 per month.[26]

Although Pennsylvania had supplemented the federal WIC program earlier in this decade, it has not done so recently, and the federal funding is decreasing as well. As a result, WIC clinics are reducing services and participation is down. That means less formula, milk and healthy foods for the mothers and kids who need it to stay healthy. For 2000, the average number of monthly WIC program participants in Bucks County was 5,189, a drop of 136 from 1999. Chester and Delaware Counties also saw a drop in their number of WIC recipients, with 4,115 and 7,782 participants respectively. Montgomery County was the only county in this region that saw an increase in participation, from a monthly average of 5,285 participants in 1999 to 5,622 in 2000. Philadelphia also witnessed a decline in WIC participation; on average there were 46,512 WIC recipients monthly in 2000, 626 fewer than in 1999.

### Promising Practices

The food stamp program is one of the few benefit programs that calculates a family's expenses when setting benefit levels. The food stamp application has been reduced from 16 pages to eight pages, but it is still eight pages and remains cumbersome. The "excess shelter" deduction has been increased from $300 to $340 to more accurately reflect families' living expenses. In addition, families can now automatically deduct one vehicle, regardless of its value, from their household resources (previously, if the vehicle's value was over $4,650, the excess was counted toward the household's $2,000 resource limit).

**Monthly WIC Program Participation (2000)**



**Actions Needed**

*Each of these possible changes would help low-income families receive consistent benefits without burdensome intrusions into their work and family lives:*

- √ simplify the application process so that it would make a difference to children and families of the region;
- √ reach out to those families who are eligible for food stamps and WIC. These families need not only understand they are eligible, but they need to be assisted throughout the application and reporting process so that they acquire and retain the benefits that will help them feed their families;
- √ inform parents and enroll more children in available school breakfast, lunch and summer food programs;
- √ make the Food Stamp program more compatible with employment by reducing the frequency of face-to-face interviews;
- √ provide "transitional food stamp benefits" for families leaving welfare;
- √ assign six month certification periods that require reporting income only if there is an increase that takes the household above 130% of poverty;
- √ increase their support of the WIC program by both state and federal governments.

# The Bottom Line is ... Reaching Out to New and Old Communities

*"The best way to predict the future is to create it."*
*- Peter Drucker*

Our children are African-American, Hispanic American, Asian American, Native American and Euro-American. The last ten years have reshaped our stories; many families are new here, while some have been here for centuries. They are wealthy; they are struggling.

While about 40,000 immigrants and their families have come to Philadelphia recently, these new Americans have found their way to the surrounding counties as well. In addition to the groups outlined below, many new people to the region are from Africa, from Haiti, from Russia, and other parts of the Soviet Union as well as from the Caribbean Islands. According to the recent census, 2.3% of Bucks County's population is Hispanic and 2.3% is Asian in origin; in Chester County, almost 4% of the population is Hispanic and 2% is of Asian origin, in Delaware County about 3.3% are Asian and 1.5% are Hispanic in background, in Montgomery County 2% of the population is of Hispanic origin and about 4% have Asian roots, in Philadelphia, almost 9% of the population has Hispanic and almost 5% of the population has Asian roots. Many observers note the Hispanic population particularly is undercounted in the census - *(NY Times, July 10, 2001)*.

In Montgomery County health providers express concern about the disparity between the health status and access to health care between the poor and non-poor in the county. They recognize the influx of new American families who have moved to their community, and express a desire to be responsive to their needs. They cite their family centers, home visiting programs, MOMobile outreach and early intervention services as efforts to support these families.

In the midst of struggles to adjust to a new culture and raise children, immigrant communities are pulling together to start new programs, such as an after-school program for Haitian children. Families in an area of Overbrook with a concentration of children in one elementary school turned to the Haitian Community Center to coordinate a program in the school after 3:00 each day. Parents wanted their children to do well in school, but because of the language barrier were limited in being able to help with their children's homework. In this after-school program, a bilingual staff provides homework assistance, arts and crafts, and music and recreation activities. They also engage in activities that celebrate and reinforce the richness of Haitian culture.

*"It's a godsend. I don't have enough English to help her with her school work. She is safe and happy everyday until I can pick her up." - a parent*

**Actions Needed**

Many immigrant children struggle with new language, new customs and new settings. These families need special outreach and assurance so that they can be provided with necessary benefits and supports.

# The Bottom Line is ...
# Education

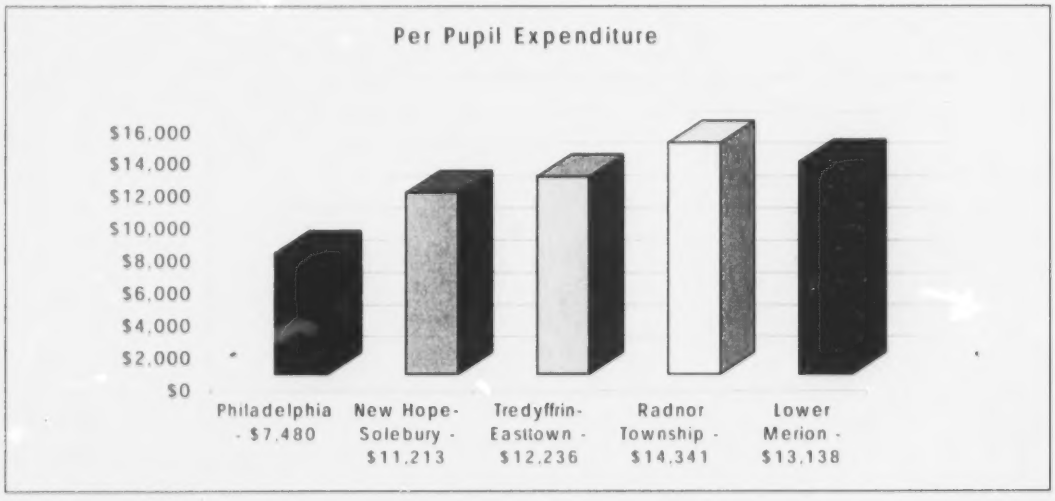
*"When fully considered, public education is a concept of great, indeed breathtaking grandeur. When done poorly, it diminishes us all. When done well it is a work of art, of science, of passion, and aspiration - that has hugely to do with who we as individuals and as a nation - will become."*

*- Raymond Bacchetti.*

In Southeastern Pennsylvania's 63 school districts, public education both diminishes and thrills us. We see aspiration and we see despair. We sometimes see success against all odds, but too often we just see the odds - playing out their expected ends. Our schools teach equal opportunity but don't live up to their teaching. While we do not believe that education is shaped only by resources, we believe that adequate funding to provide what works is a necessary precondition for school success. Unfortunately, our schools teach harsh truths about equal opportunity in the region.

Some districts have children who come to school having been read to every day at good child care settings or at home. Some do not. Some children come to schools with full day kindergarten programs, but many do not. Some school districts in the region boast small class size, librarians and libraries, music and art programs, adequate resources and computers, good learning climates, innovative programming, extra time and supports for kids, educators who are appreciated and supported accordingly, and an abundance of qualified teachers and administrators. Other school districts limp along hoping to staff the class rooms, to control the uncertainty, to hope for a miracle and get through the year. But the education wars of the last years have taught us that just getting through each year can wear out the students, the parents, the educators and the voters.

In Montgomery County, Lower Merion spent more than $13,000 per pupil in 1999 and Norristown spent a little more than $10,000; in Chester County, Tredyffrin-Easton spent more than $12,000 per student and Oxford Area School District spent little more than $7000; in Delaware County, Radnor spent more than $14,000 per pupil while Upper Darby spent a little more than $7,000. In Bucks County, New Hope-Solebury spent more than $11,000 per student while the Centennial School District spent $8,000 on each student. In Philadelphia, where the expenditure per pupil was a little less than $7,500, the funding saga goes on as the largest School District in the State faces on-going turmoil shaped by fiscal uncertainty, inadequate numbers of qualified teachers and supplies, deteriorating facilities and large concentrations of low-income children.



**Promising Practices**

The focus on reading in many of the region's schools, the urban/suburban partnerships bringing kids together from different backgrounds, Philadelphia's twilight schools and literacy interns, the continuing extraordinary successes of some Philadelphia's magnet programs, the student mentors programs, the increasing recognition of the importance of involving parents and community at the school sites (both the traditional public schools and charter schools), the focus on lowering truancy rates and increasing expectations are all promising. The community service and tolerance projects in many of the schools across the region add to this promise. The high achievement of students in every county, from the science and math prizes to history, poetry and oratory awards, from excelling in art, drama, dance and music to athletic endeavors that help build self-esteem, is inspirational. But, at the same time, we are wasting the talents and promise of tens of thousands of our children who are our best hopes.

**Actions Needed**

*As a state, a region and a city, we must:*

√ change the state school funding system by having the state provide the major funding in an equitable system and ending the reliance on the property tax so that we may practice equal opportunity;

√ lower class size;

√ provide full day kindergarten as an option to children in all districts;

√ offer different courses in recognition of the different ways students learn;

√ provide free or low cost transportation to schools;

√ reframe the way that charter schools are funded;

√ provide incentives to encourage people to become teachers and provide support to sustain educational leadership ;

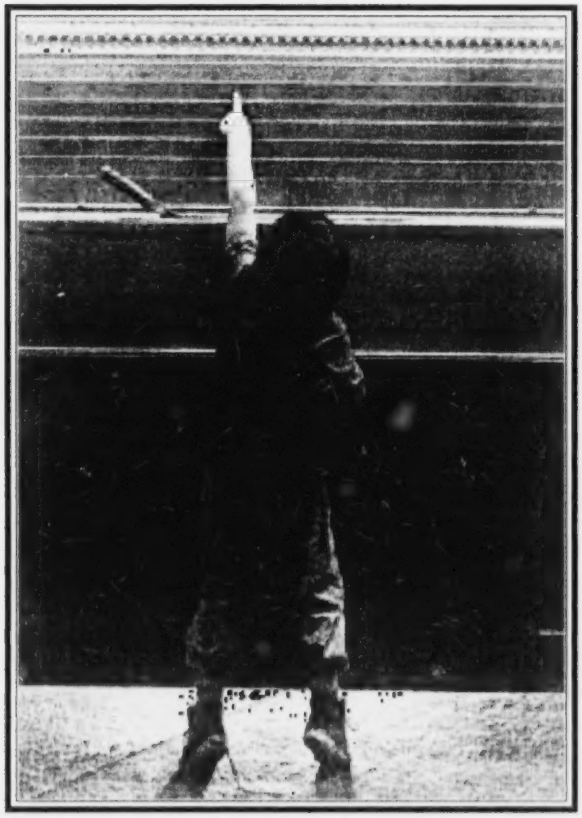
√ provide the kind of staff support and development that will make the difference and hold ourselves, our school staff and our elected officials accountable for improving the public schools of our region.

We must return the vision of public education by holding our society to higher standards and holding high and realistic expectations for all our children.

## Education Data for Southeastern Pennsylvania

| | Bucks County School Districts | | Delaware County School Districts | | Chester County School Districts | | Montgomery County |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Centennial (1999-00) | New Hope-Solebury (1999-00) | William Penn (1999-00) | Radnor Township (1999-00) | Coatesville (1999-00) | Tredyffrin-Easttown (1999-00) | Norristown (1999-00) |
| Per Pupil Expenditure | 1998-99= $8,500 | 1998-99= $11,213 | 1998-99= $8,259 | 1998-99= $14,341 | 1998-99= $8,196 | 1998-99= $12,236 | 1998-99= $10,148 |
| Percent of Low-Income Students | 15% | 1% | 46% | 3% | 29% | 3% | 53% |
| District Average Salary (Administrative / Supervisory) | $86,310 | $89,895 | $77,324 | $92,078 | $83,232 | $93,787 | $84,233 |
| District Average Salary (Classroom Teachers) | $56,071 | $59,247 | $51,546 | $61,752 | $44,527 | $60,696 | $50,603 |
| SAT Score Averages | 987 | 1043 | 816 | 1177 | 934 | 1123 | 927 |
| PSSA Grade 5 - Reading / Math | 1370 / 1410 | 1390 / 1400 | 1250 / 1220 | 1430 / 1440 | 1300 / 1320 | 1450 / 1460 | 1290 / 1300 |
| PSSA Grade 8 - Reading / Math | 1360 / 1360 | 1500 / 1540 | 1230 / 1220 | 1470 / 1480 | 1290 / 1300 | 1430 / 1490 | 1280 / 1280 |
| PSSA Grade 11 - Reading / Math | 1350 / 1350 | 1450 / 1490 | 1170 / 1140 | 1380 / 1470 | 1280 / 1250 | 1430 / 1480 | 1260 / 1280 |
| Percentage of teachers with Masters or Doctoral Degrees | 64% | 63% | 54% | 70% | 34% | 73% | 54% |
| Percentage of teachers with five or less years of experience | 32% | 30% | 28% | 15% | 31% | 23% | 26% |
| Percentage of teachers with six or more years of experience | 68% | 70% | 72% | 85% | 69% | 77% | 74% |
| Class Size | Kindergarten - Grade 3= 22 Grades 4&5= 24 | Kindergarten - Grade 4= 23 Grades 5-8= 26 | Grade 1 = 20 - 25 Grades 2,3,4 = 22 - 25 Grades 5,6 = 25 - 30 | Elementary= 20 | Grade1= 20 Grade 2= 22 Grade3= 23 Grades 4&5= 25 | Kindergarten - Grade 1=21 Grade 2 = 22 Grades 3&4 = 24 | Grades1-3= 26 Grades 4-6= 29 |

# The Bottom Line is ...
# Juvenile Justice



*"We either build our children one at a time or we keep building jails to put them in."*

*- Colin Powell*

During the last decade, juvenile crime, nationally and locally, generally decreased while dispositions became increasingly punitive. Zero tolerance policies and treating youth as adults became the norm throughout much of the country. In the region, about 44,800 youth were arrested in 1999-2000, a decrease of more than 6,000 from 1996. Three of the counties, Philadelphia, Montgomery and Bucks showed an arrest rate decrease with Philadelphia showing by far the largest decrease at 6,000. In spite of this seemingly positive trend in Philadelphia, the numbers of arrests are significantly higher for drug and personal offenses and lower for property offenses. (ProDes Policy Report, Juvenile Justice Trends and Projections, Crime and Justice Research Institute November 2000).

While overall arrest rates declined in the last decade, the number of youth who were drug involved and whose crimes were committed with guns increased, as did the number of incidents of crime occurring in schools.

**Promising Practices**

The increased emphasis and support for youth development programs during the non-school hours is a major advance because juvenile crime peaks in the hours immediately after school. The state budget's inclusion of $15 million for youth development programs, and the counties of Southeastern Pennsylvania's increasing investment, underscores the recognition of the importance of prevention. The expansion and success of youth aid panels combined with new therapeutic work with families holds the promise of reducing recidivism. Philadelphia's violence reduction program and the movement to replace the Youth Study Center are commendable. The identification of truancy as a precursor to delinquency and various early intervention programs concerning truancy are good first steps, as are strengthening after-care programs and violence prevention programs, enhancing community-based programming, linking probation officers with school communities, increasing home and community-based programming for delinquent youth, and providing them with specific skill training and educational supports. Even with these efforts, much more needs to be done.

**Actions Needed**

*As a community and as a region, we must:*

√ continue to invest more in youth development;

√ increase the number of Youth Aid Panels;

√ recognize that most of our youngsters will come back to the community so we must strengthen community-based options;

√ bring back youth who are in out-of-state placement;

√ expand violence prevention and education initiatives;

√ look at some of the detention facilities in our midst and refuse to accept conditions that are unacceptable.

*Finally, we strongly recommend:*

√ increasing drug treatment for addicted juveniles;

√ increasing community-based vocational options for struggling juveniles;

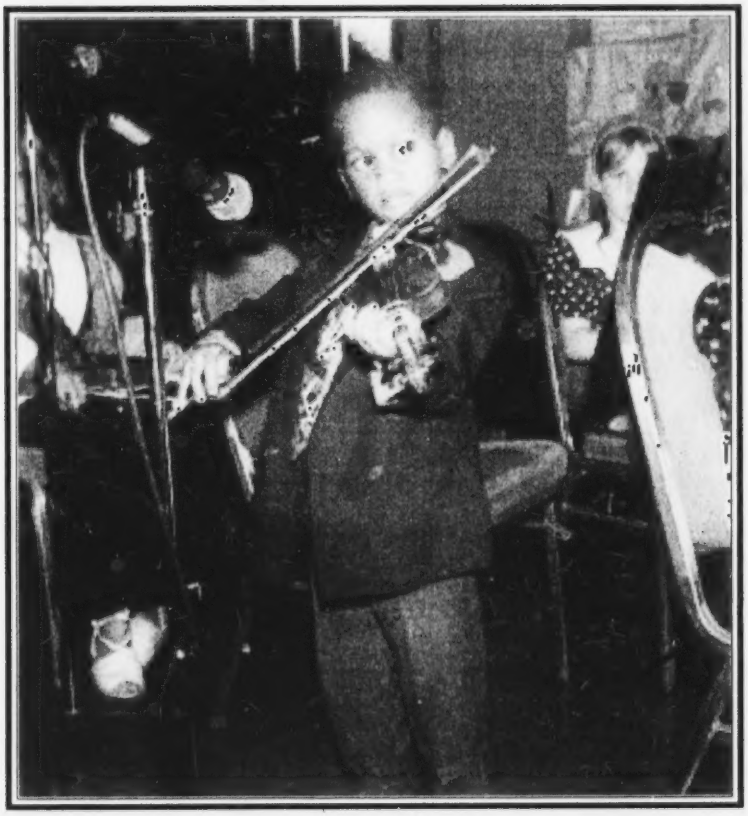
√ increasing our investment in early education as well as kindergarten through twelfth grade education;

√ ridding our communities of guns for all of us.

*All of these actions are critical steps to making real the promise of juvenile justice.*

| Juvenile Justice Data for Southeastern Pennsylvania | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Bucks | Chester | Delaware | Montgomery | Philadelphia | Region |
| Juveniles Ages 10-17 | 65,004 | 45,962 | 58,928 | 72,828 | 159,658 | 402,380 |
| Delinquency Dispositions | 1,588 | 706 | 1,573 | 2,029 | 7,860 | 13,756 |
| Delinquency Placements (out-of home) | 303 | 228 | 205 | 241 | 5,627 | 6,604 |
| Youth in County Detention Facilities Over the Course of the Year 2000 | 798 | 422 | 802 | 647 | 6,016 | 8,685 |

# Footnotes



[1] Young Children in Poverty: A Statistical Update, June 1999 edition, National Center for Children in Poverty. As of February 2001, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines set the poverty level for a family of four at $17,650.
[2] Children's Defense Fund
[3] The Philadelphia Daily News, 5/17/01
[4] United States Census Bureau, 2000.
[5] Children's Defense Fund, The State of America's Children Yearbook, 2001.
[6] May 2001 TANF children figures by the Bureau of Program Evaluation, Division of Statistical Analysis.
[7] This figure does not include the value of food stamps and other non-cash assistance the family may receive. In addition, the 1989 change in cash assistance grants was a mere 5% increase.
[8] Department of Public Welfare (DPW) estimate provided at its state budgetary presentation, February 2, 2001.
[9] The Pennsylvania Family Economic Self-Sufficiency Project, Welfare Update Presentation, June 26, 2001.
[10] Receipt of even $1 of cash assistance counts towards his or her 60 month TANF limit.
[11] The Self-Sufficiency Standard was developed for Wider Opportunities for Women as part of the State Organizing for Family Economic Self-Sufficiency Project by Dr. Diana Pearce. It measures the income needed for a family of a given composition, in a given place, to adequately meet its basic needs – without public or private assistance. The calculation accounts for housing, child care, food, transportation, health care, "miscellaneous," and tax costs, as well as factoring in earned income, child care, and child tax credits. The standard is not luxurious or even comfortable, yet it is not so low that it fails to adequately provide for a family. The standard provides income sufficient to meet minimum nutrition standards, and to obtain housing that would be neither substandard or overcrowded.
[12] Women's Association for Women's Alternatives, The 1998 Self-Sufficiency Standard, pp. 35-37.
[13] Ibid.
[14] A family of four will qualify for services if their income is below $41,472 per year, $3,456 per month. Both Families who have received TANF, and those who have never received TANF, who are income eligible may receive services through the Family Works program.
[15] Those who are working 20 hours per week and participating 10 hours per week in a DPW approved activity- typically education, training, or volunteer work- may also qualify for a "*time out*."
[16] To qualify for a "*time out*" as an exempt volunteer, the TANF recipient must be currently exempt from the TANF work requirements for verified medical reasons and participate in the Maximizing Participation Project (MPP).
[17] Generally, kinship care includes any type of living situation where a family member or another adult who is emotionally close to a child takes on the responsibility of caring for and raising that child. The criteria to qualify for a "*time out*" as a kinship caregiver are stringent, and many kinship caregivers will fail to qualify under the requirements as they currently stand.
[18] Only 111 families had been granted waivers from the TANF work requirements based upon domestic violence according to DPW's quarterly report in August 2000. The prevalence of domestic violence is likely much higher, and more outreach will be needed to make the new "*time out*" available to victims both meaningful and optimally utilized.
[19] For instance, for a family of three in which the mother works 20 hours per week at $5.15 per hour for one year would receive an EITC payment of $2,150 for the year, or $179 per month. For details go to www.irs.gov.
[20] For details and eligibility income tables, go to www.revenue.state.pa.us.
[21] "State of the States": A Profile of Food and Nutrition Programs Across the Nation," Food Research and Action Center (FRAC), December, 2001, pg 1.
[22] Income eligibility is based on household income. Gross monthly income must be below 130% of poverty. If there is an elderly or disabled member of the household, gross monthly income may not exceed 165% of poverty. Program benefits are based on net income, and a variety of deductions are allowed, including child care costs, some shelter costs, and others.
[23] Nationwide, participation in the Food Stamp Program has declined 34% since 1995, four times more than the decline in the poverty rate.
[24] Pennsylvania Hunger Action Center, www.pahunger.org.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Pennsylvania Hunger Action Center. In addition, during either June or July, pregnant, postpartum and breastfeeding women receive $25 in vouchers for the purchase of fresh fruits or vegetables at local farmers' markets; children ages 2, 3, and 4 receive $20 in vouchers.

# The Bottom Line is ...
# Our Thanks

## The Bottom Line is... PCCY

Philadelphia Citizens for Children and Youth (PCCY), founded more than 20 years ago, is dedicated to improving the lives and life chances of our region's children. Through thoughtful and informed advocacy, community education, targeted service projects and budget and policy analysis, we seek to watch out and speak out for the region's children. On behalf of all the children for whom we speak and work, we would like to take this opportunity to thank our many sponsors of the work of PCCY this year, including:

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## The Bottom Line is... Project Staff

Shelly D. Yanoff, Executive Director * Kathleen Fisher, Watching Out for Children Project Coordinator * Pat Redmond, Health Director * Sharon Ward, Child Care Policy Director Steven E. Fynes, Information and Events Coordinator

## The Bottom Line is... PCCY Staff

Shelly D. Yanoff * Bobbie Dunham * Kathleen Fisher * Steven Fynes * Kim Glassman * Aldustus Jordan * Angie Logan * Bill Madeira * Bettina Pearl * Bonnie Raines * Pat Redmond Bárbara Torregrossa * Gail Smith * Sharon Ward * Esther West * Francyne Wharton

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In each of the counties,
a child is taking a first step,
reading a first book,
bringing home a first A,
playing on a first team.

*Every day...*

grown ups in each of the counties can
celebrate, nuture and support them.

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## Philadelphia Citizens for Children and Youth

Seven Benjamin Franklin Parkway
Sixth Floor
Philadelphia, Pa 19103
215-563-5848
215-563-9442
www.pccy.org


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